

2018 STUDENT WRITING CONTEST

Northern Region Essay Winner

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My name is Angie Muguruza, and I came to this country three years ago. I started high school as a sophomore, and I didn't know English very well. I will never forget my first day of school. I was so lost that I don't know how I even found my class, because the school was huge. I remember my first class was Algebra 1 and when the teacher was asking everybody to participate, I was scared to raise my hand because I didn't know how to speak English—and that made me feel upset at myself.

My classes were easy, but the fact that I didn't know English was making things hard. A couple of weeks later, I started to realize that if you know English, you can do everything you want in this country. If not, you will struggle a lot, in my opinion. I didn't like the fact that I couldn't speak English very well, so I started studying every day, and nights, too. I would look at YouTube videos to listen to the pronunciation, and I would have my dictionary in my backpack every day. If someone asks me if it was worth it, then I would say yes, it was worth it, because I learned English in one year, and I started speaking and no one could stop me. I joined a club, and I was the president for three years. I helped other students to have a voice.

Learning English was awesome. The girl who was always quiet in class didn't exist anymore. I started enjoying my class more, because now I could participate, too. There is no excuse for anyone to say that English is impossible. If you dedicate yourself and put in time and effort to achieve your goal, you will make it. The decision is in your hands, and no one can tell you otherwise, because what you tell your brain to do, it will do. I wish other young immigrant students understood this. They get frustrated because they think it's too hard, but it is only about motivation and something that we say in Spanish that has no word in English: “*ganas*.”